

Partnership for Kids:
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**Thinking Outside the CASA Box:
The Role of the Child Advocate
in the Family Drug Treatment Court**

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Richmond Family Drug Treatment Court
Mission & Vision Statements
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Mission

The Richmond Family Drug Treatment Court offers hope for healing, transformation, and family preservation to families affected by addiction using an innovative, collaborative, best practices approach to assisting parents before the Juvenile and Domestic Relations District Court.

Vision

The Richmond Family Drug Treatment Court will support the creation of strong, healthy families while improving the health, safety, and well-being of the community by working to break the multi-generational cycle of addiction in families before the Juvenile and Domestic Relations District Court.

Richmond Family Drug Treatment Court

Prenatal exposure to drugs, neglect and/or abuse during the early years of critical brain growth and a lack of support and nurturing during their school years leave the children of substance abusing parents at risk for a host of developmental challenges. The children are vulnerable to developmental, emotional and behavioral problems and delays in growth, motor skills, speech and cognition. The acute stress resulting from abuse and neglect may result in an array of symptoms in children of various ages. Infants may feed poorly and experience failure to thrive; older children may display symptoms of aggression, withdrawal, apathy, and psychological disengagement. Teenagers may have established life-styles in the shadow of the neglect which are harmful to their physical, emotional and mental health.

The American Academy of Pediatrics in its report "Development Issues for Young Children in Foster Care" recommends that "...pediatricians and other professionals with expertise in child development should be proactive advisors to child protection workers and judges regarding the child's needs and best interests, particularly regarding issues of...medical, developmental and mental health treatment." They further indicate that "...evaluation, planning, placement, and treatment decisions be made as quickly as possible, especially for very young children."

Family Drug Treatment Courts such as those in Douglas County, Omaha, Nebraska; Reno, Nevada; Suffolk Co., NY; Kansas City, Missouri; and San Diego County, California all agree that services for the children of drug court families must be comprehensive and immediate. The Richmond Family Drug Treatment Court has prepared a set of children's protocols which call for expedited, comprehensive assessments to be performed by professionals who are culturally competent. It is our hope that by defining their needs early we can offer services to the children which will enhance their development, begin to ameliorate the effects of abuse and neglect and break the cycle of addiction.

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Richmond Family Drug Treatment Court

All children in Family Drug Treatment Court will have age appropriate medical, developmental, psychological and educational assessments. Because the focus of FDTC is achieving permanency faster and because our children may have been exposed to prenatal substance abuse, physical abuse, neglect and inappropriate adult behavior it is imperative that they receive these services as soon as possible. The following protocols will ensure that we provide for the best interests of our children in an efficient and timely manner:

1. At the first treatment team meeting following a client's acceptance to the program, DSS and CASA will review the child's needs and determine who will be responsible for obtaining the necessary medical, educational and/or psychological records.
2. Appointments for appropriate comprehensive assessments for the child(ren) will be set within 30 days of the parent's acceptance into FDTC.
3. The Family Drug Treatment Court children will have comprehensive assessments within sixty days of the parent's acceptance into the program.
4. Once all assessments are complete the treatment team will discuss which services are needed for each child and who will provide them.
5. CASA will participate in all aspects of exceptional education planning, including but not limited to attending eligibility meetings, requesting Child Study meetings and discussing the results with parents.
6. The RBHA clinician will provide a copy of the Client Assessment Summary to the CASA case manager upon the entry of the participant into the FDTC.
7. Permission forms for the children's assessments will be a part of the FDTC participant packet.
8. Team members will compile a list of service providers who can perform educational, developmental and psychological assessments for FDTC children.

Richmond Family Drug Treatment Court

Name: _____ DOB: _____

Mother: _____ FDTC Date: _____

Assessment	Appointment	Done	Services	
Developmental				
Educational				
Psychological				
Physical				
Dental				
Other				
Other				

☐ RBHA Client Assessment Summary

☐ Permission for child assessments signed and received

☐ IEP Meeting Date_____

☐ Child Study Meeting Date_____